**Target Theme: Policies services that achieve good outcomes for children**

**Abstract**

**Title: Kenya’s health sector budgetary allocations: how aligned is it to child health national priorities?**

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The Kenya government budgetary allocations ideally reflect national priorities in addressing societal and human development challenges facing its people. Budgets more often address people's rights equitably by embracing citizen participation in decision making on allocative efficiency and mutual accountability. In this paper, we investigate the link between budgets and public service delivery by examining the efficiency of government spending in the health sector towards achieving results for children and women. We define efficiency as the maximization of overall health gain of society from a given constraint of resources.

We utilize both qualitative and quantitative data from desk reviews, surveys, statistical abstracts as well as meta-analysis of reports from governmental and non-governmental organisations. The central government expenditure data for the study period (2003/2004 to 2009/2010) was compiled from annual approved estimates of revenue and expenditure reports that are available from the Ministry of Finance.

We find that absolute budgetary allocations in the health sector increased over the study period. However, as a percentage of total public spending, public investment in health declined. Over 70 percent of the recurrent budget is spent on the wage bill and other operational expenses, leaving less funds for programme related activities. Annual direct public spending on child and women programmes under the health sector did not exceed 10 percent of total public health sector expenditure. As a result, implementation of maternal and child programmes relies heavily on donor financing, which is often unpredictable. Evidence of joint programming and implementation for the health and other sectors was also found to be minimal.

To address its priorities, Government needs to increase its contribution towards child and women related programme activities in the health sector. The proven positive synergies between health and educational outcomes need to be explored for effectiveness and cost-saving in service delivery.